

No Action Alternative

Concept Description

For analysis purposes, a no-action alternative is described in the plan. The no-action alternative serves as a base line measurement for comparing the resource conditions and visitor experiences prescribed by the three alternative management concepts. The conditions and trends listed below would be maintained in the no-action alternative.

- The park is expected to be funded and staffed at a level comparable to current conditions. Park management continues to be an active, responsible, and contributing member of the local community.
- Current parking area remains the same size and while the shared parking agreement with Flat Rock Playhouse continues in effect, availability of open spaces in the playhouse lot lessens as their performance schedule grows. The number of parking spaces in the existing parking area is slightly increased by restriping, however the number of additional spaces realized from this effort does not satisfy peak demand.
- Amphitheater remains in its present location near the main house. Facility is maintained but not improved or enlarged.
- Trailer restroom continues to serve visitors in its present condition and location. Facility is maintained but not improved or enlarged.
- High quality interpretive tours and programs continue to be provided at main house area, amphitheater, barn area, and in local schools.

- Historic artifacts and archival materials continue to be professionally cared for and preserved in the museum preservation center. Museum objects are exhibited at main house and in some historic structures.
- Existing trails are maintained and managed in current conditions. Granite rock domes are protected from excessive recreational use.

A detailed description of existing conditions is presented in Chapter 3, Affected Environment.

Prescriptive Management Zones

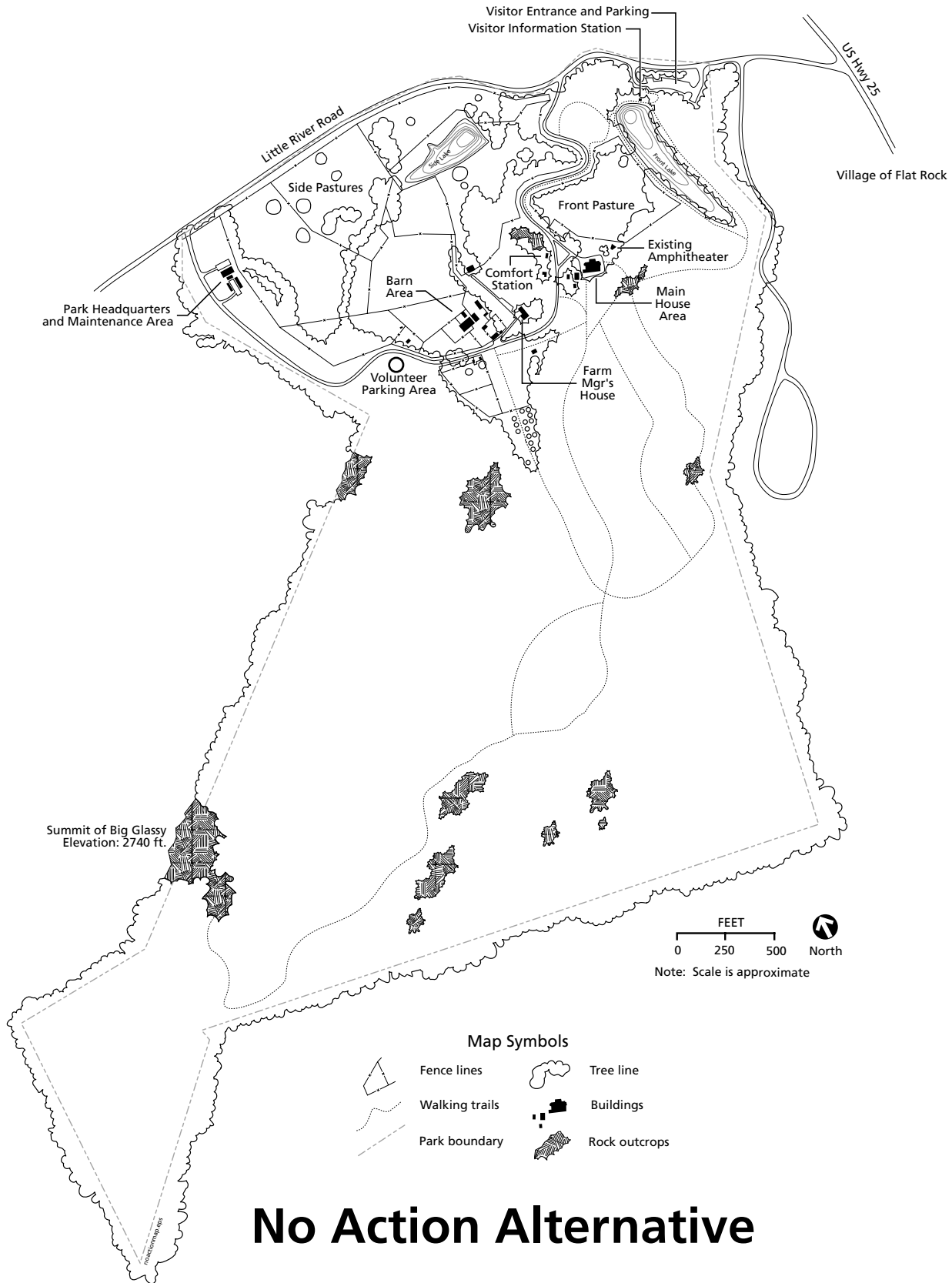
Prescriptive management zones are not used in the no-action alternative. Park management continues to be guided by the 1971 master plan, 1977 development concept plan, and 1996 amendment to master plan. Figure 2-1 shows existing conditions at the park.

Needed or Allowable Changes

The no-action alternative describes a future condition which might reasonably result from the continuation of current management policies. As such, new programs, activities, or developments that cause significant change are not considered in this alternative.

Cost Estimate

No additional costs are associated with the no-action alternative because it does not propose significant changes over existing conditions.



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Figure 2-I. Existing Conditions / No-Action Alternative

Summary and Comparison

Comparison by Major Decision Points

Figure 2-m summarizes the differences between alternatives by contrasting the approach and degree to which each addresses the Major Decision Points developed in Chapter I.

Comparison by Alternative Highlights

Figure 2-n summarizes the differences between alternatives by contrasting their major features and highlights.

Assessment Process and Selection of Preferred Alternative

The term “factor” as defined in this plan is a category of environmental conditions used to describe potential environmental impacts. Factors were identified by the planning team through an in-depth review of the comments and concerns expressed during scoping.

Guided by policy and public input, the planning team established criteria representing the most preferred condition for each factor. A minimum criterion was established when appropriate and generally reflects the minimum standard established by Federal Law or NPS policy. Criteria for each factor are detailed in Chapter 4, Environmental Consequences. The alternatives were then assessed for their ability to achieve the preferred condition in each factor. Alternatives were not required to fully achieve the most preferred condition in every factor to be considered viable. Each alternative was, however, required to meet the minimum criterion for every factor in order to be considered viable.

Scale of Assessment:

The following scale was used to assess the ability of each alternative to achieve the most preferred condition for each factor.

- **Exceptional** – results of implementing the alternative clearly meet and exceed the high criteria. An assessment of exceptional is the most desirable assessment and indicates that implementing the alternative would most likely result in a highly desirable, unique, or beneficial environmental condition readily noticed by visitors.
- **Moderate** – an assessment of moderate is a positive assessment indicating that implementing the alternative would result in conditions which generally satisfy the high criteria for the factor, but do so in a way that would not be noticed by most visitors.
- **Minor** – results of implementing the alternative do not satisfy conditions described in the high criteria for the factor but clearly exceed minimum criteria and fall well short of resource impairment. An assessment of minor is a neutral assessment acknowledging a less than optimum

environmental condition that can be successfully managed to minimize its impact on visitor experience or resource protection goals.

- **Negligible** – results of implementing the alternative are notably less than the preferred condition but still exceed minimum criteria for the factor and do not cause resource impairment. An assessment of negligible generally indicates some visitors may perceive an environmental condition associated with implementation of the alternative as a distraction, inconvenience, or unfulfilled desire.

Selection of a preferred alternative was accomplished using a Choosing by Advantages (CBA) value analysis - a decision making process based on the advantages of different alternatives for a variety of factors.

In this plan, advantages were determined by measuring the difference between assessments for each factor among the alternatives. A most important advantage was selected from the compiled list of advantages and assigned a score of 100. The remaining advantages were then given importance values relative to the most important advantage and totals were compiled for each alternative.

Individual assessments for each factor and alternative are documented in Chapter 4, Environmental Consequences. A summary the factors and importance values used in the analysis is shown in Figure 2-o. It should be noted that the importance values shown for each alternative represent the specific advantages of one alternative over another relative to a single factor. Importance values in the figure are not intended to imply that one factor is more important than another.

Selection of Environmentally Preferred Alternative

The environmentally preferred alternative is the alternative that best promotes the national environmental policy as expressed in NEPA; is determined to cause the least damage to the biological and physical environment; and best protects, preserves, and enhances the historic, cultural, and natural resources of the park. Based on the CBA process, which incorporated the most important environmental impact issues into its assessment and analysis, the Sandburg Center alternative is considered to be the environmentally preferred alternative because it achieved the highest total importance value.

Major Decision Points	Sandburg Center Alternative	Paths of Discovery Alternative	Connemara Life-style Alternative	No Action
1. To what degree should the need or demand for recreation activity be accommodated at the park?	Opportunities for walking and hiking provided. Recreational activities that compromise the hist. integrity of the site are controlled			Walking and hiking are loosely integrated into the overall park interpretive program. User conflicts continue to be a management concern.
	New trails not constructed in Historic Discovery or Historic Interaction Zone.			
	Primary emphasis is placed on increasing interpretation and other opportunities that educate visitors about the life and works of Sandburg. Walking and hiking considered an important but secondary method of delivering the interpretive message to visitors.	Walking and hiking is an important vehicle for exposing park visitors to the Sandburg Story. Visitor Services Zone expanded to accommodate a sensitively designed interpretive connector trail that increases walking and hiking opportunities within the park.	Primary emphasis is placed on maintaining the historic scene and character of the park. Opportunities for walking and hiking are closely monitored and use regulated to limit visual impact on the historic scene.	
2. Is visitor use better controlled using single or multiple access points?	Unofficial access points are closed.			Multiple unofficial access points continue to be a management concern.
	Visitors arrive and enter the park through the main entrance only. The off-site visitor center provides an additional contact point but visitors still enter the NHS through the main gate.	Visitors arrive and enter the park through the main entrance or a secondary pedestrian access point at the back gate. The off-site visitor center provides an additional contact point but visitors still enter the NHS through the main entrance or the secondary pedestrian access point.	Visitors arrive and enter the park through the main entrance only.	
3. To what degree can or should the park rely on Public/Private partnerships to procure the necessary resources to manage the park?	Partner relationships continue to be an important park and community asset			
	Success of alternative is moderately dependent on the Park's ability to establish and maintain strong partnerships.	Success of alternative is highly dependent on the Park's ability to establish and maintain strong partnerships.	Success of alternative is slightly dependent on the Park's ability to establish and maintain strong partnerships.	Success of alternative is moderately dependent on the Park's ability to establish and maintain strong partnerships.
4. Can the park continue to provide quality visitor services and protect cultural and natural resources of the park within the existing boundary of the park? Is a boundary expansion needed, and if so, how much and for what purpose?	Success of alternative is dependent on a boundary expansion. Approximately 3 to 5 acres needed to accomplish the critical parking and visitor center goals of the alternative. Approximately 110 acres need additional protection	Success of alternative is dependent on a boundary expansion. Approximately 3 to 5 acres needed to accomplish the critical parking and visitor center goals of the alternative. Approximately 110 acres need additional protection	Success of alternative is not significantly dependent on a boundary expansion although a boundary expansion of approximately 1 to 2 acres is recommended to accommodate an off-site parking area. Approximately 25 acres need additional protection	Park has reached its maximum authorized boundary and cannot expand to address pressing parking and visitor service or resource protection needs.
5. How extensive a role should the park play in interpreting the Sandburg legacy to people beyond the boundary of the park?	Park reaches out to a national, if not world-wide, audience.	Park reaches out primarily to a regional and local audience.	Park reaches out primarily to a local audience.	Park continues to provide high quality interpretive programs to primarily local and occasionally regional or national audiences.

Decision_Points_Table.eps

Figure 2-m. How Alternatives Address Major Decision Points

Feature or Highlight	Sandburg Center Alternative	Paths of Discovery Alternative	Connemara Life-style Alternative	No Action
1. Provides additional parking	10 additional parking spaces created by expansion of existing visitor parking area near Front Lake (contingent on relocating bus parking).			No additional parking
	Additional parking provided in association with visitor center at location outside existing boundary of park		Additional parking at 1 to 2 acre location outside existing boundary of park	
2. Size of and purpose for proposed boundary expansion	Up to 110 acre expansion for scenic view and resource protection		Up to 25 acre expansion for scenic view and resource protection	No boundary expansion proposed
	3 to 5 acres for visitor center and parking area		1 to 2 acres for parking area	
3. Visitor Center	Owned and operated by NPS or in partnership with others at location outside existing boundary of park		No visitor center proposed	
4. Improved Visitor Information Station in Visitor Services Zone	Existing facility renovated and expanded to provide additional on-site interpretive opportunities and improve visitor orientation			No improvement proposed
5. Provides additional multi-purpose areas for interpretation and museum programs	Visitor center includes additional multiuse program areas		Visitor center not proposed	
	Additional areas included in visitor information station renovation			No additional program areas
	Additional program areas provided at select historic structures	Additional multiuse interpretive program areas not proposed in historic structures		
6. Provides additional walking trails	Additional trails permitted in visitor services zone near Front Lake			No new trails proposed
	Connector trail not proposed	Adds a 3/4 mile long interpretive connector trail along Little River Road and Back Drive between visitor parking area and barn area	Connector trail not proposed	
7. Treatment of trailer restroom near residence	Replaces existing facility with sensitively designed new facility in same location			Existing facility remain in service
8. Places additional interpretive waysides in historic landscape	Additional interpretive waysides placed on trails near Front Lake in visitor services zone. Existing waysides removed from historic discovery zone			No additional waysides proposed
	Total number of waysides slightly more than existing conditions	Additional waysides on new pedestrian interpretive trail	Total number of waysides slightly less than existing conditions	Approximately 6 interpretive waysides currently on site
9. Additional staff required by full implementation of alternative	Up to 9 positions needed over time. Total number may be reduced by using trained volunteers	Up to 6 positions needed over time. Number may be reduced by using trained volunteers	Up to 3 positions needed over time. Number may be reduced by using trained volunteers	No addition of staff
10. Treatment of Amphitheater	Proposes new amphitheater of approximately the same size be constructed at one of three approved locations. Old site would be restored to period of significance condition.			Existing facility remains in service

Alt_Highlights_Table.eps

Figure 2-n. Features and Highlights of Alternatives

FACTORS	ALTERNATIVES							
	Sandburg Center		Paths of Discovery		Connemara Lifestyle		Existing Conditions (No Action)	
	Advantage	Importance Value	Advantage	Importance Value	Advantage	Importance Value	Advantage	Importance Value
Preservation of historic building interiors	No advantage		Medium advantage	67	Medium advantage	67	Medium advantage	67
Introduction of non-contributing elements to the historic landscape	Small advantage	54	No advantage		Small advantage	54	Medium advantage	100
Opportunities for solitude or a contemplative experience	No advantage		No advantage		Medium advantage	74	Small advantage	48
Provides high quality facilities to support a variety of interpretation and museum programs	Large advantage	82	Medium advantage	62	Small advantage	37	No advantage	
Provides visitors with opportunities for personal contact with NPS personnel (staff or trained volunteer)	Small advantage	50	No advantage		No advantage		No advantage	
Provides opportunities for public access to museum collection and related information	Medium advantage	74	Small advantage	54	No advantage		No advantage	
Promotes continued learning and research of Carl Sandburg	Medium advantage	90	Small advantage	65	No advantage		No advantage	
Provides opportunity to link park themes with local, state, national and international education programs	Small advantage	40	No advantage		No advantage		No advantage	
Potential to preserve existing vegetation	No advantage		No advantage		No advantage		Medium advantage	52
Minimizes maintenance responsibility	No advantage		No advantage		Small advantage	28	Small advantage	28
Provides additional parking spaces	Medium advantage	70	Medium advantage	70	Medium advantage	70	No advantage	
Enhances employee, volunteer, and visitor safety	Small advantage	36	Small advantage	36	No advantage		No advantage	
Enhances energy conservation or reduces energy consumption	No advantage		No advantage		Small advantage	17	Small advantage	17
Provides additional opportunities for walking	Small advantage	29	Medium advantage	44	No advantage		No advantage	
Provides incentives for partnering with local governments, community groups, and individual citizens	No advantage		Small advantage	46	No advantage		No advantage	
Potential economic benefit to local community	Small advantage	15	Small advantage	15	No advantage		No advantage	
TOTAL RELATIVE IMPORTANCE VALUE		540		459		347		312

CBA_Summary.eps

Note: A "no advantage" advantage is represented in the importance value column by a blank cell

Figure 2-o. Factors, Advantages, and Importance Values of Alternatives

